



Niagara Catholic District School Board
OPENING OR CLOSING EXERCISES

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

300 – Schools/Students

No 302.6.1

Adopted Date: June 26, 2001

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: November 24, 2025

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are Administrative Operational Procedures for Opening or Closing Exercises.

PREAMBLE

The Administrative Operational Procedures for Opening or Closing Exercises provide direction to Niagara Catholic schools' teachings, foster a sense of community, and promote respect for Indigenous heritage, Canadian identity, and civic responsibility.

Opening or closing exercises may be adapted for virtual or hybrid learning environments, ensuring the continued alignment with the Board Multi-Year Strategic Plan, the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, and legislative requirements.

Implementation of the Administrative Operational Procedures for Opening or Closing Exercises is the responsibility of the school principal, in consultation with the Family of Schools' Superintendent.

OPENING OR CLOSING EXERCISES

Daily opening or closing exercises must include in this order:

1. The Board approved Land Acknowledgement, read respectfully to recognize the traditional territories of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. It is preferred that the Land Acknowledgement is read by a non-Indigenous individual to open the school day;
2. The playing and/or singing of the official lyrics (English/French) of O Canada in accordance with provincial legislation; and
3. A prayer, which may include a scriptural reading and/or reflection to enhance the message for the day.

PLEDGE OF CITIZENSHIP

The principal, after consultation with staff and the Catholic School Council, may decide to include the reciting of the pledge of citizenship in opening or closing exercises. This practice shall be reviewed on an annual basis at the beginning of each school year.

Pledge of Citizenship:

- I affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles the Third King of Canada, and to his heirs and successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen.

EXEMPTIONS

A student is not required to sing O Canada or recite the pledge of citizenship in the following circumstances:

- In the case of a pupil who is less than 18 years old, if the pupil's parent/guardian applies in writing to the principal of the school for an exemption from the exercises.
- In the case of a pupil who is at least 18 years old, if the pupil applies in writing to the principal for an exemption from the exercises.

Niagara Catholic supports equity and inclusion where the rights of all students are respected under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Principals will ensure that a request for an exemption is confidential, and submitted on an annual basis.

References:

- [*Education Act s.304*](#)
- [*Government of Canada: Anthems of Canada*](#)
- [*O. Regulation 435/00, s.1*](#)
- [*Ontario Human Rights Code*](#)
- [*Niagara Catholic District School Board Policies/Procedures*](#)
 - [*Safe and Accepting Schools Policy \(302.6\)*](#)
 - [*Equity and Inclusive Education Policy \(100.10\)*](#)
 - [*Religious Accommodation Policy \(100.10.1\)*](#)

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